Community *Contact*

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

March/April 2011

For and About Local Government Development

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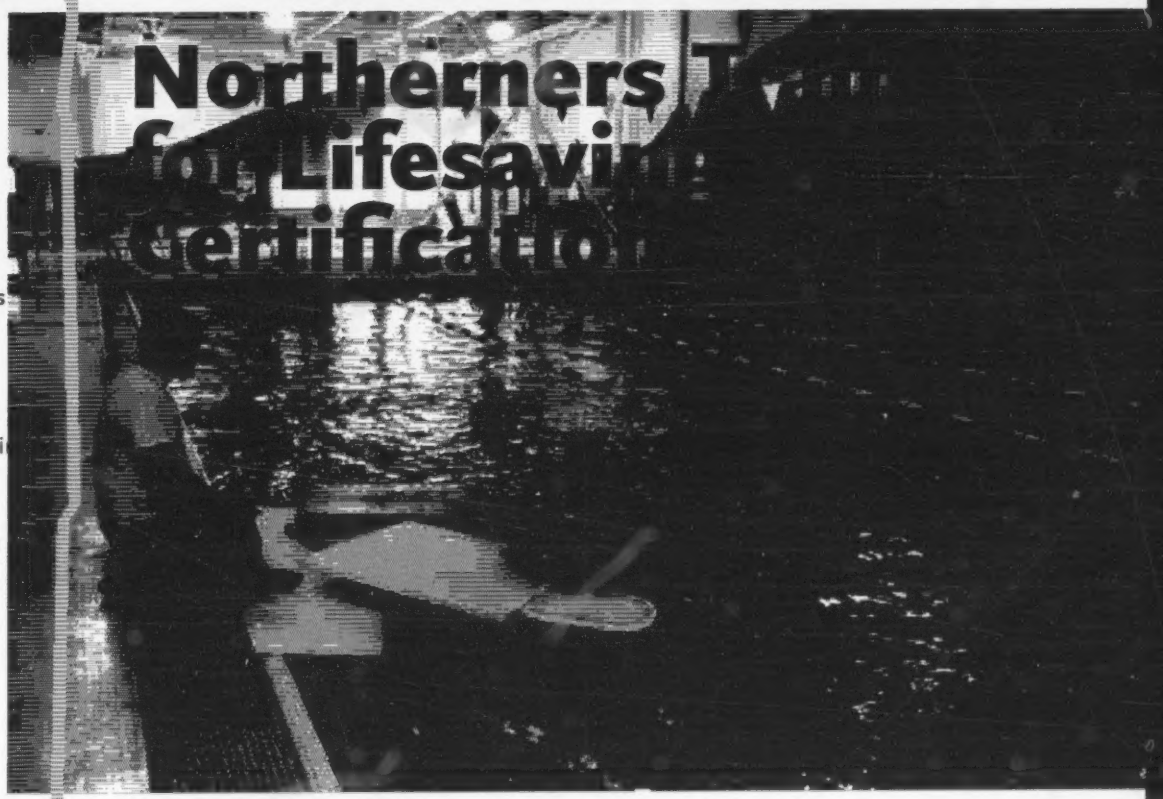


Instructor Jon Sorokowski teaches (left to right) Linda Benoit, Shayla Mink, Darren Campbell, Devin Chartrand and Trudy Hart about how to use floatation aids in lifesaving.

Manitoba

This Issue

Welcome to the March/April *Community Contact* newsletter.

By the time this issue reaches you, we should be well on our way to seeing signs of spring in a majority of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) communities. The theme for this issue is municipal administration, which is timely, since many communities are starting their spring and summer planning and also have new council members from the fall 2010 municipal elections. The information presented in this newsletter will help new and existing community council members and their employees better understand some of the ANA program areas.

Our feature article takes us to the Manitoba Branch of the Lifesaving Society and a special lifeguard training program held in January and attended by six residents from First Nation and ANA communities. These are the first steps participants must take if they are interested in becoming a certified lifesaving instructor or national lifeguard. Their success is great news for the communities of the participants because there are not many people trained to this level in northern Manitoba.

We continue the issue with reviews of two community regional workshops for council members held in early March and a Workplace Safety and Health workshop for community employees held this past December in Thompson. The reviews of these workshops outline the agenda items covered and any information that will be sent out to communities as part of the workshops process. To help Statistics Canada ensure everyone in your community is counted, we include information about the May 10 census day. It is important that our northern population is accurately recorded, not only for ANA program and policy planning, but so all levels of government have accurate numbers to use when they decide how much to spend and where to spend it.

Along with these articles we include information on how late enrolment in the Municipal Employee Benefits Program could cause a financial burden for a community council. We also look at the claim process for volunteer fire fighters if they are injured while on duty. Closing out this issue is the municipal calendar reminders for the months of April and May 2011.

Enjoy this issue and please feel free to contact us with your comments, pictures or article suggestions, or to request additional copies.

Lifesaving Socie
Closer to Quali

Did you know that drowning rates in northern Manitoba are the highest in the province?

While it is true that more people who live in remote areas rely on water transportation and are therefore more often exposed to the hazards, it also points to a need to address the hazards.

Over the past six years, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) has being doing just that by helping the Manitoba Branch of the Lifesaving Society deliver their Northern Water Smart® program in northern and remote communities. The success of this program in teaching northern youth about water safety and providing basic swimming lessons has prompted several people from these communities to work towards becoming a certified lifesaving instructor or national lifeguard.

This past January, two people from ANA communities and four from First Nation communities in Manitoba were successful participants in a lifeguard training program presented by the Lifesaving Society. The program provided a combination of lifesaving training courses including Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross levels as well as Emergency First Aid. The training was conducted over an intensive five days of swimming drills, physical rescue skills training and hands-on first aid instruction. All the training took place at Canadian Forces Base 17 Wing Recreational and Fitness Centre in Winnipeg.

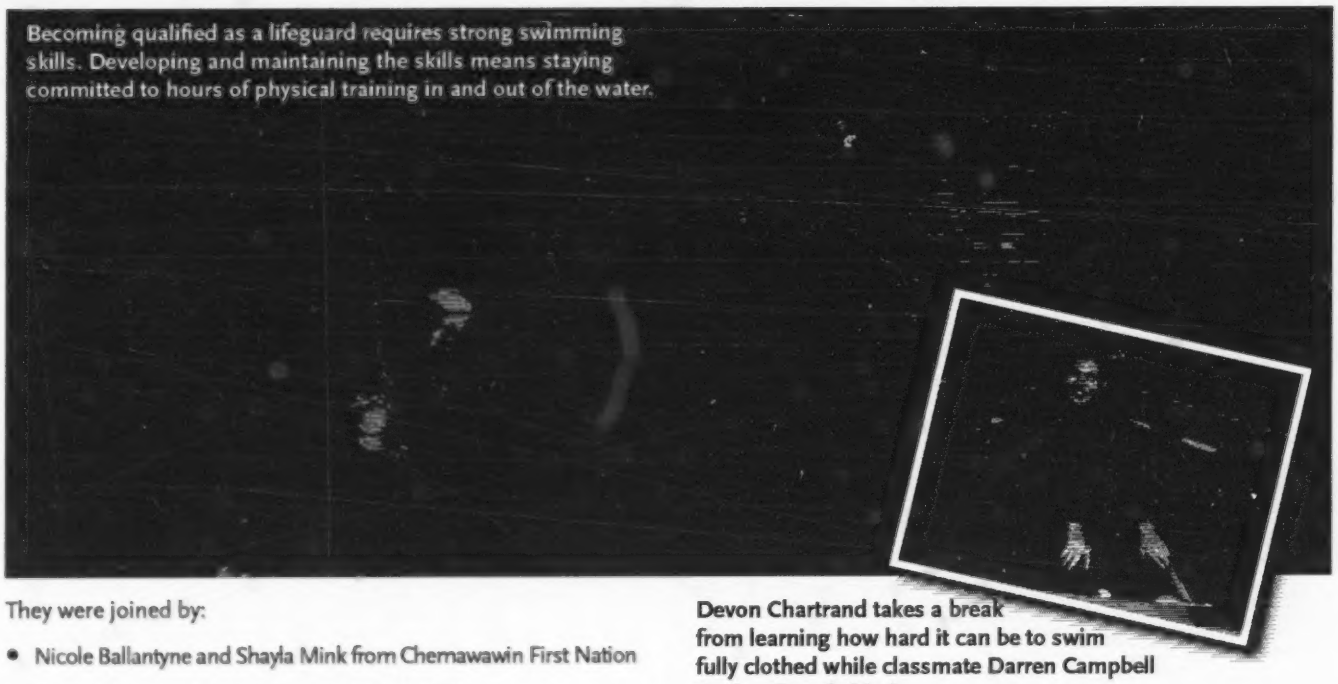
The Bronze Medallion course teaches lifesaving based on four rescue principles — judgement, knowledge, skill and fitness. Trainees learn tows, carries, defence and release techniques to prepare them for challenging, high-risk rescues. They also learn to respond to increasingly complex situations involving conscious victims and unconscious victims with airway obstruction. Timed swimming exercises help them develop stroke efficiency and endurance.

The next level, Bronze Cross is designed for lifesavers who want to challenge themselves with even more demanding training. That training includes introduction to safe supervision within aquatic facilities. Earning the Bronze Cross is also a course prerequisite for all other advanced training programs, including National Lifeguard Service (NLS) and Lifesaving Instructor certification.

The participants from ANA communities were:

- Crystal Nabess from Cormorant
- Trudy Hart from Norway House

ty Trainees
fying as Lifeguards



Becoming qualified as a lifeguard requires strong swimming skills. Developing and maintaining the skills means staying committed to hours of physical training in and out of the water.

They were joined by:

- Nicole Ballantyne and Shayla Mink from Chemawawin First Nation
- Devin Chartrand from Pine Creek First Nation
- Darren Campbell from Skownan First Nation
- Linda Benoit from Winnipeg

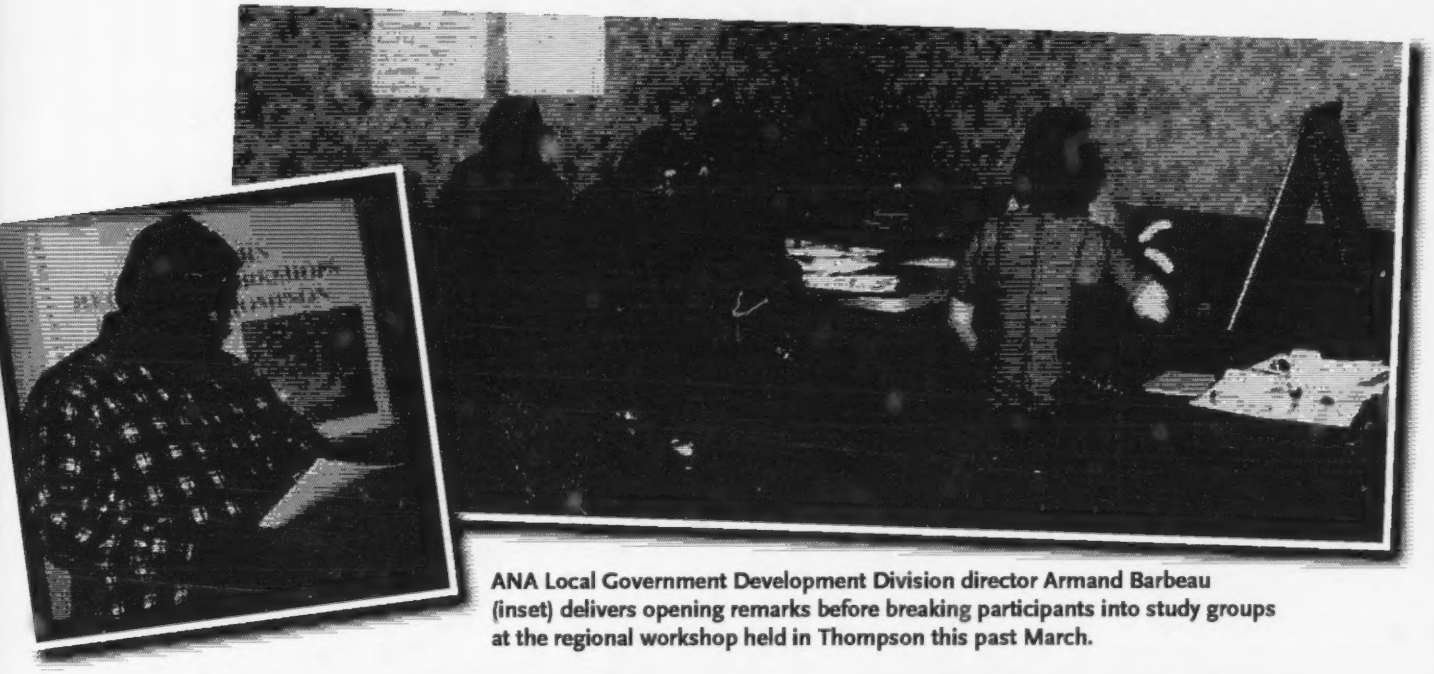
All seven trainees completed Emergency First Aid training and five of them earned both Bronze Cross and Bronze Medallion certification as well. By continuing with advanced training, all of the participants will eventually be able to become qualified by the Lifesaving Society to teach swimming and first aid.

The Lifesaving Society – Manitoba Branch has recognized the need for water safety education in Manitoba's northern and remote communities and specifically developed their Northern Water Smart® program to address water safety in these areas. The program began in 2005 when one lifeguard-instructor travelled to six communities. By 2010 the program had grown to five instructors and a year-round co-ordinator who travelled to as many as 40 communities each year. Since the program's inception, more than 6,500 northern residents of all ages have participated in Water Smart® programs.

Devon Chartrand takes a break from learning how hard it can be to swim fully clothed while classmate Darren Campbell pushes from behind.

Northern Water Smart® plans include returning to northern and remote communities in Manitoba this summer with funding support from ANA and Health Canada. They hope once again to have five instructors visit up to 40 communities beginning in late June. Communities wishing to participate in the program are asked to provide safe lodging and some meals for instructors who will stay in each community for five days while providing training. Training will include the Swim to Survive® program, Pleasure Craft Operator course and training in Emergency First Aid and CPR.

The Lifesaving Society is a national non-profit, charitable organization whose mission is water safety and injury prevention through their lifesaving education and training programs. For more information on any of their programs, or to register your community for the program, visit their website at www.lifesaving.mb.ca; contact Lisa Bruce at 204-956-2124; or email watersmart@lifesaving.mb.ca.



ANA Local Government Development Division director Armand Barbeau (inset) delivers opening remarks before breaking participants into study groups at the regional workshop held in Thompson this past March.

Community Regional Workshops held in Dauphin and Thompson

This past March, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) conducted three-day regional workshops in Dauphin and Thompson for community elected officials from the north central region and the northern region. The workshops offered a perspective on community priorities and provided orientation on department programs for council members. Recently elected council members and newly-hired community administration officers from various communities made the workshops timely.

Both workshops featured a first day dedicated to a follow-up of the Next Steps community consultation process originally begun in 2002. The day involved small table discussions, large group discussions, organized breakout sessions and information sharing by each breakout group. Participants were divided into five department program areas and asked to identify and discuss community priorities and needs in the program areas. Information collected from this consultation process will be compiled by ANA and the results shared with communities. The information provided will help the department in future planning exercises.

Day two in the workshops included presentations and discussions aimed at helping council members understand ANA staff roles, responsibilities and department programs. Some of the day two presentations included:

- council orientation for new members
- department protective service and recreation program reviews
- 2011 census presentation
- understanding financial statements
- maintenance cost analysis funding
- regional staff roles and responsibilities

Day three featured a professional development session for council members, with a workshop called *Staying out of the Lobster Pot*, presented by Cec Hanec of Cec Hanec & Associates. The focus of this workshop was managing organizational conflict. The participants enjoyed this fun, interactive workshop and learned about many new tools to use in helping them resolve conflicts and balance work-life issues.

Manitoba Wins When You Count Yourself In

Census day is May 10, 2011

Tuesday, May 10 is census day. It is vital to your community and your province that you and everyone in your home is counted in the census.

What are the census and the National Household Survey?

The information collected by the census and its companion, the National Household Survey (NHS), gives us a snapshot of Manitoba communities. It is extremely important in guiding the decisions provincial and federal governments make about funding, planning and policies for our communities. Businesses and other agencies also use the information to help respond to marketplace demands.

Every person missed means community projects may not receive as much support as they should. Funding opportunities will be lost that could affect education, health and social programs, and infrastructure renewal projects. Funding for these important programs is tied to population numbers so it is important for you and your family to be included.

In fact, Manitoba Finance estimates every Manitoban missed by the census will cost the provincial treasury $40,000 in lost federal transfer payments. Federal transfer payments are money from federal tax revenues paid back to provinces to support many programs and initiatives,
for example, highways and municipal infrastructure.

How will the census and the National Household Survey be conducted?

The census will collect information from all households and all agricultural operations. In the first week of May, Canada Post will deliver a yellow census package to about 70 per cent of households. The remaining 30 per cent will receive their form from a Statistics Canada employee. The National Household Survey will be sent to 4.5 million Canadian households in early June. Canadians will have the option of returning their census and NHS forms online or by mail.

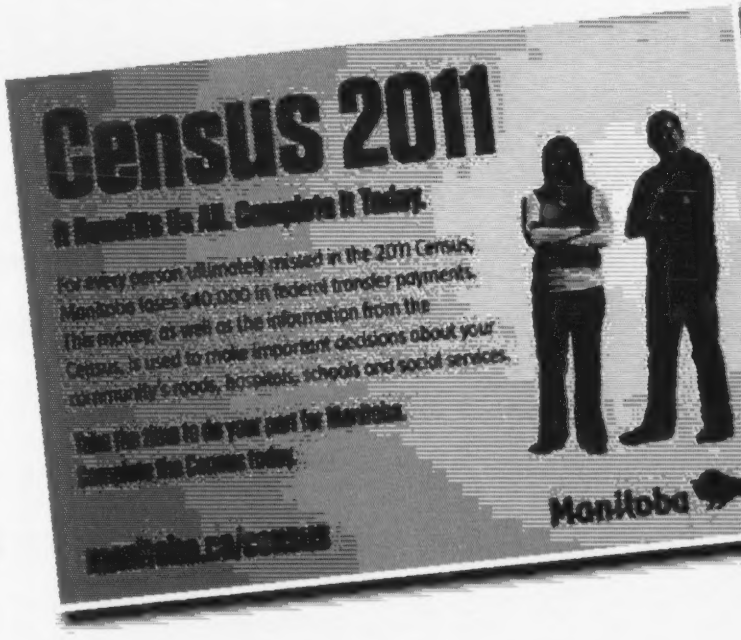
Confidentiality of information

What everyone needs to know is that the privacy of every census and NHS form is protected by the law. Only Statistics Canada employees who work directly with census and NHS data will see completed questionnaires. All census staff carry photo identification authorized by the Chief Statistician of Canada. Census staff must take an oath of secrecy in addition to passing a written and oral test and successfully completing training.

Census now hiring

Statistics Canada is now hiring for a variety of supervisory and non-supervisory jobs for the 2011 Census. These jobs are ideal for students, recently retired people, stay-at-home parents and people wanting to supplement their income. Statistics Canada offers flexible work hours, competitive wages and work in both rural and urban areas.

If you are interested in 2011 Census employment, please visit the 2011 Census pages at the Statistics Canada website www.census2011.gc.ca or call toll free 1-866-773-2011 for more information.



MEBP – Council and Employee Liable for Late Registration

In most cases, full or part-time employees on the payroll of a municipal council supported by the Local Government Development Division of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs are required to be enrolled in the Provincial Municipal Employee Benefits Program (MEBP).

Wage increases in recent years have brought earnings of many part-time employees, who had not previously been required to join the MEBP, up to qualifying levels. Late enrollment of community employees in MEBP can cause a financial burden for the council and the employee. The problem is all too common and completely avoidable.

If a qualified full or part-time employee is not registered for the benefits program, council must pay for all amounts owing to MEBP up front. This includes both employee and employer contributions. Council is then responsible to seek reimbursement for amounts they failed to deduct from the employee's wages. In some cases, the employee may have moved on and no longer be employed by the community, making collecting difficult.

Part-time and seasonal employees earning over $10,000 per year for two consecutive years must be enrolled in the MEBP on the first pay period of eligibility. Other part-time employees may also voluntarily enroll in the program on approval from council. All full-time employees must be enrolled in the MEBP on completion of a six-month probationary period of employment. Qualified employees not enrolled may find themselves without benefits or without proper insurance when they need them.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) will begin helping to minimize community council liability by conducting a review of community employee earnings. The review will take place every year and problems will be brought to council's attention. If you, as an employee or a community council member, have questions about the MEBP, talk to your community administrative officer or contact Leo Poulin, ANA pension program and cottage administrator. You can telephone Leo at 204-677-6615 or email leo.poulin@gov.mb.ca.

Safe Workplace Training Update

In December 2010, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) held Module 1 of its workplace safety and health (WSH) training program at the Burntwood Hotel in Thompson. The training is designed for community employees, particularly the public works and water/waste water treatment employees. Attendance is also open to council members and community administrative officers. Offered twice each year, the training is important because it helps community employees ensure compliance with provincial WSH legislation and regulations.

The training is organized by ANA and includes support for costs incurred by community employees to attend. The training in Thompson was attended by 25 people from 16 communities in both the north central and northern regions.

Module 1 of the WSH training is divided into four days, each covering a variety of topics. December's four training days covered:

1. Introduction to federal and provincial WSH regulations and legislation, outline of hazards, risks and control measures as it applies to the due diligence of employees, their supervisors and employers and WHMIS training (with reference to transportation of dangerous goods).
2. Review of personal protective equipment, respirator fit testing and training and medical assessment.
3. Review of fall protection, working at heights, proper use of ladders and confined space awareness training.
4. Review and practice of confined space entry and rescue.

Module 2 of the WSH training program will be held in Winnipeg May 9 to 13, 2011. The training in this module will cover:

- introduction to hazards recognition and control
- introduction to lock out and tag out (CSA) standards
- review of trenching and shoring excavations including new amendments, incident causes and investigation
- review of working alone requirements
- workplace violence and harassment
- contractor management
- respirator fit testing for those who could not attend previous training

For more information on this training or to register for Module 2, contact Ron Bruneau, technical and public works and workplace safety and health consultant in the ANA Thompson office. He can be reached at 204-677-0660 or by email at ron.bruneau@gov.mb.ca.

olunteer Fire Fighter Insurance Claim Process

Did you know that Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) works with a leading insurance agency to provide a high-quality insurance coverage program for community volunteer fire fighters? With municipal elections this past October, many communities have newer council members and some have recently hired a new community administrative officer (CAO). It is important for council members and the CAO to understand how the insurance program works. It is also extremely important for the fire chief and volunteers to understand the benefits and know how to make a claim.

Manitoba ANA volunteer fire fighter life and disability insurance coverage is provided by Volunteer Firefighter Insurance Services (VFIS) through their agent Elite Benefit Solutions. This insurance delivers extra security for volunteer fire fighters and their families while providing communities with a benefit they can use as an incentive to attract more volunteer fire fighters to their fire departments. Before this insurance program was put in place, community volunteer fire fighters were covered only by Manitoba Workers Compensation. The program was offered starting in July of 2008, and since that time, no ANA community volunteer fire fighter has been injured and had to make a claim.

The on-duty insurance provides volunteer fire fighters with coverage while participating in training, travelling to and from a fire and the time spent fighting a fire on location. If for example, a fire fighter broke a leg while involved in any of these activities, that person would be covered by insurance and would need to complete a claim to receive benefits.

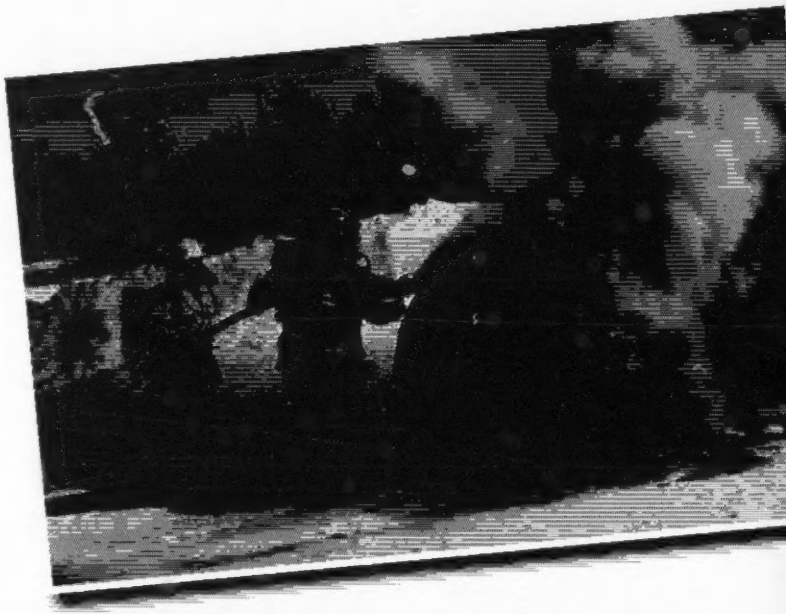
To make a claim, you will need to prove your income with a copy of your T4 slip or paystubs and provide copies of applicable documents from the Workers Compensation Board.

You will also need to have a completed *Initial Claimant Report* and an *Attending Physician Report* signed by your doctor.

Both these forms are provided to all ANA communities as part of the VFIS insurance program package. The forms tell the insurance company important claim-related information like:

- what were you doing when you were hurt
- how the accident or illness occurred
- what exactly was your injury or illness
- what medical care you are receiving
- whether you may experience long-term disability

Communities are asked to keep copies of these forms in their fire hall or provide an information package to all volunteer fire fighters. If you require new forms, you can email vfis@canada.com or contact Mel Weeks, benefit consultant for Elite Benefit Solutions at 1-866-925-8273 or email mweeks@mts.net.



Life and disability insurance coverage is provided by VFIS for ANA community volunteer fire fighters while travelling to and from fires, while involved in fire fighting and while training.

Municipal Calendar Monthly Reminder for April and May 2011

April 2011

1 Deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to dept to avoid penalties.

4 Submit quarterly GST refund.

5 Management maintenance systems (**MMS**) – service mowers & trimmers.

15 Deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty.

18 Start to prepare files and schedules for audit, usually due by June to the audit firm.

22 **GOOD FRIDAY**

25 **EASTER MONDAY**

30 Submit Municipal Employee Benefits Program (MEBP) year-end financial statement and quarterly payroll report.

Event:

- April 20 – 21: Capturing Opportunities will be held in Brandon (Keystone Centre).

Community:

- All communities must submit the March 31, 2011 year-end financial statement by the end of the month.
- Submit bi-weekly water and monthly sewer samples.
- Finalize capital project applications for Capital Approval Board; deadline is first Monday in May.
- Submit MEBP form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period.
- If applicable, submit bi-weekly payrolls for Building Independence Program to regional office.

WSH Reminders:

- Council to ensure fire extinguishers and first aid kits inspected.
- Council to act on items highlighted as corrective action from inspections.
- Council to conduct annual fire drills, ensure maintenance of fire extinguishers and ensure smoke detectors are in working order.

May 2011

1 Deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to department to avoid penalties.

2 Deadline for capital project applications.

MMS – isolate lagoon cells.

3 **MMS** - crawl space vents opened.

4 **MMS** - heat traces turned off.

5 **MMS** - recirculating pumps turned off.

6 Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation to reply regarding requests made March 15 for grant-in-aid.

15 Deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty.

16 **MMS** – lagoon samples sent out after two-week isolation.

23 **VICTORIA DAY**

Events:

- May 9-13: Workplace Safety and Health training – Winnipeg.
- May 18-20: Vision quest to be held in Winnipeg at the Convention Centre.

Community:

- Submit bi-weekly water samples and monthly sewer sample.
- Submit MEBP form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period.
- If applicable, submit bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Program to regional office.

WSH Reminders:

- Council to ensure fire extinguishers and first aid kits inspected.
- Council to act on items highlighted as corrective action from inspections.
- Are your training records up to date?

Departmental:

- Review of capital project applications for missing information during this month.
- Regional office will complete maintenance cost analysis review by month end.

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Community council members, community residents and department staff are encouraged to submit comments, questions, suggestions, article ideas and photographs to the editor.